

Proclamation 7361—General Pulaski Memorial Day, 2000

October 10, 2000

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

Each year on October 11, we solemnly pause to honor the life and achievements of Casimir Pulaski, a true hero whose devotion to liberty has inspired the gratitude of the American people for more than 200 years.

Born to wealth and privilege in Poland, Pulaski sacrificed both by joining his father and brothers in the fight against tyranny and foreign oppression in his beloved homeland. His battlefield exploits earned him a leading position among Polish patriotic forces as well as renown and admiration throughout Europe. After years of braving insurmountable odds, however, Pulaski and his fellow freedom fighters were overwhelmed by enemy forces. Undaunted, he continued to battle for Poland's freedom while in exile in Turkey and France.

Impressed by Pulaski's military record and reverence for freedom, Benjamin Franklin wrote from his post in Paris to George Washington and succeeded in helping Pulaski secure a commission in the Continental Army. As a result of Pulaski's brave and able conduct at the battle of Brandywine Creek in 1777, the Continental Congress granted him a Brigadier General commission and the command of all Continental Army cavalry forces. For the next 2 years, General Pulaski contributed much to the American cause in the Revolutionary War through his battlefield expertise, mastery of cavalry tactics, and extraordinary courage. On October 9, 1779, Pulaski was gravely wounded at the siege of Savannah while leading patriot forces against fire from enemy batteries. He died 2 days later, far from his beloved homeland and mourned by the brave Americans whose cause he had made his own.

Today, as both the United States and Poland enjoy freedom and growing prosperity and look forward to a bright future as friends and NATO allies, we remember with profound appreciation Casimir Pulaski's resolve and sacrifice and the generations of Poles

and Americans like him who valiantly fought to secure the peace and liberty we enjoy today.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim Wednesday, October 11, 2000, as General Pulaski Memorial Day. I encourage all Americans to commemorate this occasion with appropriate programs and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fifth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., October 12, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 11, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on October 13.

Remarks on Signing the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001, and an Exchange With Reporters

October 11, 2000

The President. Good morning. I want to thank Representative Norm Dicks and Representative Ralph Regula for their extraordinary bipartisan leadership. I thank Secretary Babbitt, NEA Chairman Bill Ivy, National Endowment of the Humanities Chairman Bill Ferris, the Institute of Museum and Library Services Director Beverly Sheppard, OMB Director Lew, Millennium Council Director Ellen Lovell, and all the other many people who are here who have worked so hard with chairman Regula and Congressman Dicks and members of both parties in both Houses to protect the environment and strengthen our Nation's artistic and cultural life.

I have just signed this year's Department of Interior Appropriations Act. It is a remarkable piece of legislation that provides a lasting legacy for our grandchildren by establishing for the first time a dedicated and protected fund that States, communities, and Federal agencies can use to buy and protect precious Federal land, from neighborhood parks to Civil War battlefields to parcels of pristine wilderness. It doubles our investment in land conservation next year and ensures even greater funding in the years to come.

While we had hoped to gain even more and will continue to work for these priorities in our budget negotiations, this new lands trust unquestionably represents a major leap forward in the quest to preserve our environment, a quest begun by President Teddy Roosevelt a century ago.

This bill will also do much more. It will provide much-needed additional funding for health, education, and law enforcement in our Native American communities, something that has been of particular interest to me. It will provide better funding to take better care of our national parks and deal with a lot of long pent-up maintenance needs.

It will increase support for firefighters in preventing forest fires, something America has seen all too much in the last few months. It increases our efforts to combat climate change and to provide more energy security by increasing funds for research and to energy-saving technologies, including more energy-efficient buildings and automobiles. It supports the partnership for the next generation vehicles, which the Vice President has led, and strengthens our energy security through providing funding for the Northeast heating oil reserve.

The bill also increases support for arts and humanities, including the first funding increase for the National Endowment for the Arts since Congress proposed to eliminate it in 1995. The birds like it. *[Laughter]* It will help to expand our efforts to bring the experience of art to children and to citizens no matter where they live, from inner cities to remote rural areas. We're also pleased that the bill includes a third year of funding for the Save America's Treasures program, the larg-

est historic preservation effort in our Nation's history, which the First Lady has led.

Just as important is the fact that the bill does not include contentious riders which would have damaged our environment. This legislation is proof positive that when we sit down together and work in a bipartisan spirit, we can do things for the American people. And again, I want to thank Mr. Regula and Mr. Dicks and all of the others who have worked with them to do that.

We still have a lot of work to do. We've got 10 appropriations bills to pass, an education budget that invests in accountability and what works, including the continuation of our 100,000 teacher program, funds to modernize and repair schools, an expanded after-school and college opportunity program, qualified teachers in every classroom; a criminal justice budget that gives us safer streets and stronger communities; a budget that enforces civil rights and ensures stronger efforts for equal pay for women, creates opportunities for all Americans to share in our prosperity through the new markets initiative.

I would also like to ask one more time for Congress to pass the Patients' Bill of Rights, which passed the House of Representatives with a large vote exactly a year ago this week.

Unfortunately, it appears that instead of passing patient protections, legislation intended to restore reductions in the Medicare program is unduly tilted toward the HMO's who killed the Patients' Bill of Rights or have so far.

Last night I sent a letter to the leaders rejecting that allocation of funds. There are rural—urban teaching hospitals, community service providers, nursing homes, any number of other recipients of these funds that would be substantially disadvantaged if the present allocation goes through.

So I hope that we can put the needs of the patients ahead of the HMO's and do the right thing on health care. But let me say again: I think it is very important that the American people understand this is a truly historic achievement, achieved in a genuine, bipartisan spirit to create a permanent basis for preserving our natural heritage and advancing our common artistic and cultural values. I am profoundly grateful.

Thank you very much.

Situation in the Middle East

Q. Mr. President, did your peace plan for the Middle East ever contemplate sovereignty for the Palestinians in East Jerusalem?

The President. Well, the last thing I think we need to be doing now is talking about—I think you know what we talked about at Camp David, and what we’ve talked about since has been fairly well publicized.

Q. No, it hasn’t. I don’t know what your plan is.

The President. But I do not believe that any of us should be saying or doing anything now except focusing on putting an end to the violence, keeping people alive, calming things down, and getting back to the negotiating table.

And I do believe, by the way, that a plan to get back to the negotiating table is an important part of ending the violence in a substantial way. And so for me, that’s what we’re doing. That’s what I’ve been working on for several days now, almost a week.

Q. Do you think you will be traveling to the Mideast or elsewhere to meet with the leaders from—Palestinians and the Israelis?

The President. First of all, as always, I’m prepared to do whatever I can to help. But I think the most important thing is that we all keep working to calm things down, keep them calm, and then find a way to get the peace process going again.

I think Secretary Albright or I might go; maybe in time we’ll both go. I had a long talk this morning with Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and we’ve been working together in an attempt to make sure we’ve got a substantial calm there.

I can do a lot here on the phone. I’ve been spending a lot of days and nights on the phone, and I hope that the United States is having a positive impact. But the first thing we’ve got to do is to get this situation calmed down and figure out where to go from here. But I do believe where to go from here must include a resumption of the peace talks because that’s one of the reasons that we’ve had things so calm for so long, that we’ve basically had these talks going along, moving in the right direction.

We have to reach an agreement on this factfinding effort to determine what happened and how to keep it from happening again, and I think we can do that. So we’ve just got to keep working on it.

Q. Can I followup on that for one second? A followup on that for one second? This is sort of a pointed question about the Middle East. At this point, if you’re frustrated about possibly setting up a summit over there, do not the Israelis and the Palestinians at least owe you the courtesy of participating in such a summit, considering what you have tried to do to bring peace to the region?

The President. Oh, yes. I’m not worried about that. I think—that’s not what’s at issue there. I think we can do that. But the main thing we have to do is, we don’t need just another meeting. We need to know what we’re going to do and how we’re going to do it.

I wouldn’t over-read the fact that there won’t be a big meeting imminently in Egypt. I don’t think you should over-read that as a reflection that either the Israelis or the Palestinians do not want to continue the peace process. I think everybody is shocked at how quickly and how deeply it got out of hand. And I think the most important thing now is to restore calm.

We’ve had a couple of pretty good days. People are really trying, and we’re trying to put together a way forward, which will increase the chances that things will stay calm and more peaceful. So that’s what we’re working on. And I just have to tell you, it’s very important to us to keep all of our options open. It’s important that you know that I’m willing to do whatever I can to help, but these things have to take place in a certain way in order for them to make sense, and I’m doing the very best I can with it.

Q. Some critics of the administration’s policy blame some of the—

Q. [*Inaudible*]*—spoke of factfinding as an agreement to return to negotiations. Do you need to see those before you agree to go to the Mideast or send a representative?*

The President. Well, no. First of all, I don’t need to see anything before I send representatives. We’ve been involved with them too long, and we have been already—keep

in mind, we've had people already in the region, and then Secretary Albright met with them in Paris, and now lots of others are coming in.

I have been talking to them all for extended period of times, really since the beginning of the difficulties. So that's not it. The point is everything that the United States does should be designed toward, number one, trying to preserve the calm and, number two, trying to restore the peace process. And so I will do whatever I think is likely to advance those objectives. So that's the only thing I was saying. We're in this for the long haul. We have been from the beginning, and we'll stay.

Q. Are you disappointed at Mr. Arafat, Mr. President? Are you disappointed in Arafat's attitude?

Q. Some of the administration's critics blame some of the violence on the failed Camp David talks and charge that summit was called too soon. Do you think that's unfair? What's your response to that?

The President. I think if there had been no talks at Camp David, it would be worse now, because the pressure on the Palestinians to unilaterally declare a state would have been far worse, because their level of misunderstanding would have been even greater, because they had never—in all of these 7 years, they had never talked about these big, deep, underlying issues, not in a serious, formal way.

So I think, certainly, the Israelis, I think, were disappointed that they were as forthcoming as they were, and they thought more progress should have been made, but I think that everybody had a sense—I announced that at the time. But then after that, they continued to talk and everybody had the sense that they were moving forward. So I don't think that the evidence will support that conclusion.

Keep in mind, we were running out of time and the Palestinians, Chairman Arafat delayed the date that he had previously set for unilateral declaration. So the facts on the ground and the behavior of the parties do not support that conclusion.

The truth is, we got down to the tough issues where there were no easy answers. And I think that what this tells everybody

is that, after all these years of working together, there are still underlying different perceptions that have to be worked on. And we slid off into a sense where both sides felt as if they had been victimized and abused.

There is no alternative here but to get back together and to go back to work.

Q. How would you like to live under military occupation for 50 years?

Q. What exactly are you recommending on how to calm things down?

The President. Well, they're working on that. They have worked together on that. They have common security understandings and a very detailed set of things that both sides have been doing, and they're talking about it some more. So I think first, you have to do that, and then they have to figure out, beyond the security operations, how they're going to get back together.

Q. You are reportedly disappointed by Arafat and puzzled by his attitude. Are those reports true?

The President. I don't think that anything I say that stirs this up is very helpful. I think that, look, there's a lot of people dying over there. We need to stop people dying. And there's been enough people saying enough things that have contributed to that.

My goal is to stop people dying and then get them back together. We can all have our judgments—you have yours; they're somehow implicit in some of the questions you're asking—but what I have noticed in these circumstances is, if they do good things, there is enough credit to go around, and if the wheel runs off and people start to die, then there's enough blame to go around.

This is not the time to be assessing that. This is a time to make a primary first commitment to end violence, to keep calm, to start the peace process again, and then they can establish some mechanism to evaluate what happened and why and how to keep it from ever happening again.

Both of them have agreed to that. They haven't exactly agreed on the modalities, but they both agreed to that. So we can't lose sight of the fact that the most important thing right now is to stop people from getting shot and wounded and killed and to get the peace process back on track and to give a sense

of safety and security back to all the people there.

When you get—when things are most explosive in the Middle East, when both sides feel victimized—and we were slipping toward that at a rapid pace over the last several days—now both sides are feeling—are taking responsibility here for moving out of this, and I think the statement that Prime Minister Barak made in the middle of his night-long cabinet meeting a couple of nights ago was very helpful in that regard and a wise thing to do. And then he and Chairman Arafat have been doing some specific things here on this security front, and we need to support that and not—look, there will be plenty of time in a calmer atmosphere for people to say whatever it is they've got to say in a political nature.

But we can't bring any of those kids back to life. We can't bring any of those young people back to life. We can't bring—Lord knows how long it will take to reestablish some of the relationships that have been severed there, and none of us need to do anything to make this worse. We need to calm this down.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:50 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; and Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel. H.R. 4578, approved October 11, was assigned Public Law No. 106–291.

Statement on Signing the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001

October 11, 2000

Today I have signed into law H.R. 4578, the “Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001.” I want to commend the Congress for agreeing on an acceptable version of this bill that provides critical funding for many priority needs—our national parks, national forests, wildlife refuges, and other public lands; State and local grants for land conservation and preservation; Native American programs; cleaner

water; energy security; and the Arts. I am pleased that, unlike earlier versions of the bill, the final bill excludes a large number of highly objectionable provisions that would change our environmental protection and natural resource conservation laws without adequate public and congressional scrutiny.

In particular, I am very pleased that this Congress has agreed to establish a new budget category to provide dedicated and protected funding for the conservation and preservation programs in my Lands Legacy Initiative and other related activities. This agreement will nearly double our investment next year in these programs and move us toward providing communities with the resources they need to protect their most precious lands. By establishing this new budget category and fencing off more than \$10 billion over the next 5 years, we are fulfilling our commitment to make the single largest annual investment in protecting our green and open spaces since Theodore Roosevelt set our Nation on the path of conservation nearly a century ago.

The bill provides a significant increase in funding for key components of my Native American Initiative program, including most of the requested investments in Indian school construction and law enforcement. It also provides the largest funding increase for the Indian Health Service in its history. The bill also helps to protect the environment by increasing funds for the Clean Water Action Plan and promotes the Arts by providing the first funding increase for the National Endowment for the Arts in 9 years. In addition, the increase provided for the National Endowment for the Humanities will enable the NEH to continue to implement its Rediscovering America through the Humanities initiative.

The bill provides strong support for a number of other national priorities. It expands funding for weatherization of low-income homes, which will help low-income households prepare for the coming winter season. It includes funding for research into energy efficiency to reduce our dependence on oil and address climate change, through initiatives like the Partnership for a New Generation of Vehicles, which will aid in the development of a new generation of ultra-efficient